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5 lakh deprived of primary education

Teacher shortage, inadequate schools facilities in 3 districts

From Our Correspondent

PANCHAGARH, Jan. 23.—More than five lakh boys and girls, aged between 5 and 14, of Dinajpur, Thakurgaon and Panchagarh districts have been deprived of primary education according to a sample survey.

On an average, the survey reveals, there is only one teacher for 40 students at primary level, the total number of teachers being 5,635 in these districts.

According to the last census, there are 30 lakh people in three districts and the number of boys and girls of the age group of one to 14, stands at 12,32,000 which is 44 per cent of the total population of the areas. Of them, 8,40,000 boys and girls are of the age group of 5 to 14 years and only 3,40,000 students are studying in 1,755 primary schools, in these three districts.

Of the 1,755 primary schools 1,533 are government and 222 are private. In Thakurgaon and Panchagarh district, the number of government and private primary schools is 706 and 113 respectively while that of Dinajpur district stands at 827 government and 198 private schools.

The number of teachers for 1,755 primary schools is inadequate and it is suggested that the optimum number should be around 20,000 teachers. Besides another 500 primary schools are needed for education of children of school going age in three districts.

Girls High School

Ranisankail Girls High School, the only institution for girls in the areas, is beset with manifold problems, including acute shortage of funds.

Teachers of the school are not getting their salary for more than six months beginning from August last.

The construction work of the school building is yet to be completed. Moreover, the school has no adequate number of benches, blackboards and other necessary furniture. There is no library in the school.

Besides, lack of common room for the students is another vexing issue. On top of them girl students coming from different neighbouring villages are facing communication problem.

Teacher posts vacant

Over 371 posts of primary teachers have fallen vacant in Panchagarh, Thakurgaon and Dinajpur districts.

There are 1,555 Government primary schools in 23 upazilas of these districts. There are 75 headmasters and 296 assistant teachers whose posts have fallen vacant in those

districts.

Out of the total posts, 25 headmasters and 117 assistant teachers have fallen vacant in 5 upazilas of Panchagarh district, 11 headmasters and 49 assistant teachers posts vacant in 5 upazilas of Thakurgaon district and 39 headmasters and 130 assistant teachers vacant in 13 upazilas of Dinajpur district. As a result, teachers and students of these government primary schools are facing much trouble.

Chuadanga

Our Chuadanga correspondent writes: The poverty stricken people of the district have no alternative but to send their tiny tots to work as child labourers between the age group of 9 and 14 years move one place to another in search of work for earning their livelihood.

It reveals from a recent survey, 60 per cent of child labourers constitute the total labour force of the district.

The trend of child labour is alarming in rural and urban areas of the district. These boys of poor families have been working as carriers of smuggled goods in border areas, as boys in restaurants and hotels, salesmen in grocery and stationery shops, bakeries and biscuit factories. They also work as masson helpers, and cow boys in rural areas and as cleaners in automobile workshops.

Many children become Pickpocket and lift goods and money from passengers in railway station, trains and buses.

The poor parents can not send their children to primary schools due to pecuniary condition of their families.

Book distribution

The District Primary Education Office, Chuadanga, received 1,50,100 books from Bangladesh School Text-Book Board, Dhaka for distribution among students of Govt. Primary and registered schools of the district.

They distributed 11,000, 8,200 4,700, 3,500 and 2,500 sets of books Class-I, Class II, Class III and Class IV and Class V of Chuadanga Thana.

There are 114 Govt. Primary Schools in Alamdanga Thana 102 Govt. Primary Schools in Damurhuda Thana, and 56 Govt. Primary Schools in Jibannagar Thana.

Rajshahi

Our Rajshahi correspondent states: The irregularity of teachers of primary schools in the district is hampering the distribution of books

among the students.

The guardians of the students complained that the teachers most often remain absent.

The teachers violating role of the government in the distribution of books free of cost collect money from the students. Anyone failing to pay the money then he did not get books. As a result many poor but meritorious students suffer.

They also do not give books to the students unless they return the old books to them, the guardians complained.

Meanwhile district primary education office sources said that a total of 2,98,000 sets of primary books have been allotted for distribution among the students of government and registered primary schools in the district.

The class-wise break-up of the books is as follows 83,700 sets for class I, 79,500 sets for class II, 55,300 sets for class III, 45,000 sets for class IV, and 34,500 sets for class V.

Satkhira

Our Satkhira correspondent adds: Due to poverty of the guardians teenagers have been working in the hotels and restaurants, houses, rickshaw pullers and labourers in mills and factories, porters in the launch station, hats and bazars and cow boys in the field.

The labour they offered does not fetch due salary. The privileged people taking advantage of their poverty and exploit them.

The numbers of female day labourers is also increasing rapidly in the district due to the growing economic crisis.

According to the survey conducted by the local journalists, about 5000 children between the age group of five and 15 engaged themselves in manual work for earning their livelihood and 2000 are hawkers.

The children have no shelter in the town. They spend the whole night in the bus terminals, in front of cinema halls and on the veranda of houses. During winter their condition becomes miserable.

About 60,000 children of the district have been suffering from the skin disease and blindness.

Vitamin deficiency, malnutrition and lack of medicare facilities are the main cause of the diseases.

The Health officials opined that motivation about primary health care and use of green vegetables and small fish are needed to meet the vitamin deficiency.